

Amendments to the Claims:

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (currently amended) A flexible mold comprising:

a hygroscopic support made of a material having a tensile strength of at least 5 kg/mm² and containing moisture to saturation at a temperature and a relative humidity at the time of use by a moisture absorption treatment applied in advance; and

a molding layer disposed on said hygroscopic support, a surface thereof being provided with a groove pattern having a predetermined shape and a predetermined size.

2. (original) A flexible mold as defined in claim 1, wherein said support and said molding layer are transparent.

3. (currently amended) A flexible mold as defined in claim 1 [~~or 2~~], wherein said hygroscopic support is a plastic film ~~comprising a hygroscopic plastic material~~ that reversibly changes in dimension depending on temperature and relative humidity.

4. (original) A flexible mold as defined in claim 3, wherein said hygroscopic plastic material is at least one kind of plastic material selected from the group consisting of polyethylene terephthalate, polyethylene naphthalate, stretched polypropylene, polycarbonate and triacetate.

5. (currently amended) A flexible mold as defined in ~~any one of~~ claim[[s]] 1, wherein said support has a thickness of 0.05 mm to 0.5 mm.

6. (currently amended) A flexible mold as defined in ~~any one of~~ claim[[s]] 1, wherein said molding layer comprises a base layer made of a first curable material having a viscosity of 3,000 cps to 100,000 cps at 10°C to 80°C and a coating layer made of a second curable material having

a viscosity of not higher than 200 cps at 10°C to 80°C, the coating layer being applied over a surface of said molding layer.

7. (original) A flexible mold as defined in claim 6, wherein said first curable material and said second curable material are photo-curable materials.

8. (currently amended) A flexible mold as defined in ~~any one of~~ claim[[s]] 1, wherein the groove pattern of said molding layer is a lattice pattern constituted by a plurality of groove portions arranged substantially in parallel while crossing one another with predetermined gaps among them.

9. (currently amended) A method of manufacturing a microstructure having a projection pattern having a predetermined shape and a predetermined size on a surface of a substrate, comprising the steps of:

~~preparing~~ providing a flexible mold comprising a hygroscopic support made of a material having a tensile strength of at least 5 kg/mm² and containing moisture to saturation at a temperature and a relative humidity at the time of use by a humidity absorption treatment applied in advance, and a molding layer disposed on said hygroscopic support and having a groove pattern having a shape and a size corresponding to those of said projection pattern on a surface thereof;

arranging a curable molding material between said substrate and a molding layer of said mold and filling said molding material into said groove pattern of said mold;

curing said molding material and forming a microstructure having said substrate and said projection pattern integrally bonded to said substrate; and

releasing said microstructure from said mold.

10. (original) A manufacturing method as defined in claim 9, wherein said molding material is a photo-curable material.

11. (previously presented) A manufacturing method as defined in claim 9, wherein said microstructure is a back plate for a plasma display panel.

12. (original) A manufacturing method as defined in claim 11, which further comprises independently arranging a set of address electrodes substantially in parallel with each other while keeping a predetermined gap between them on a surface of said substrate.

13. (new) A method of claim 1 wherein said hygroscopic support is a plastic film that reversibly changes in dimension depending on temperature and relative humidity.

14. (new) The method of claim 13 wherein the flexible mold is prepared by
providing a hygroscopic support made of a material having a tensile strength of at least 5 kg/mm²;
applying a humidity absorption treatment to the support;
preparing a flexible mold from the hygroscopic support after applying the humidity absorption treatment to the support.

15. (new) A method of manufacturing a flexible mold comprising the steps of:
providing a hygroscopic support made of a material having a tensile strength of at least 5 kg/mm²;
applying a humidity absorption treatment to the hygroscopic support;
preparing a flexible mold from the hygroscopic support after applying the humidity absorption treatment to the support wherein the mold comprises a molding layer having a groove pattern disposed on the support.

16. (new) A method of claim 15 wherein said hygroscopic support is a plastic film that reversibly changes in dimension depending on temperature and relative humidity.

17. (new) The method of claim 15 wherein after applying the humidity absorption treatment the hydroscopic support has a moisture content that is saturated such that the support can no longer absorb moisture.